

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for managing electronic document production over a
2 computer network, the method comprising:
3 on a first computing device, capturing a document production request and
4 generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting services
5 for producing the document; and
6 on a second computing device, merging selected services and the
7 captured document production request into a document production plan and
8 delivering the document production plan in a device specific format to one or
9 more selected document production devices.
- 1 2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising identifying services
2 available on the network, and wherein the act of generating comprises
3 generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting the
4 identified services.
- 1 3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of generating further
2 comprises generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting
3 services not available on the network.
- 1 4. The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of identifying includes
2 querying devices present on the network.
- 1 5. The method of Claim 2, wherein the act of identifying includes
2 querying a services database.
- 1 6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the act of capturing includes
2 receiving the document production request from an application and converting
3 the production request into a generic format.

1 7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising identifying document
2 production devices capable of providing the selected services and generating a
3 user interface with user accessible controls for selecting one or more, if any, of
4 the identified document production devices.

1 8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising monitoring the status of
2 delivered document production plans.

1 9. A computer program product for managing electronic document
2 production over a computer network, the product comprising a computer
3 useable medium having computer readable instructions thereon for:
4 capturing a document production request on a first computing device;
5 generating a user interface with user accessible controls for selecting
6 services for producing the document;
7 merging the selected services and the captured document production
8 request into a document production plan; and
9 delivering the document production plan in a device specific format to one
10 or more selected document production devices from a second computing device.

11 10. The product of Claim 9, wherein the instructions for capturing
12 comprise instructions for receiving a document production request from an
13 application and transferring the production request to the second computing
14 device.

1 11. The product of Claim 9, comprising further instructions for
2 identifying services available on the network, and the instructions for generating
3 comprise instructions for generating a user interface with user accessible
4 controls for selecting the identified services.

1 12. The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for generating
2 comprise further instructions for generating a user interface with user accessible
3 controls for selecting the services not available on the network.

13. The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for identifying
comprise instructions for querying devices present on the network.

14. The product of Claim 11, wherein the instructions for identifying
comprise instructions for querying a services database.

15. The product of Claim 14, comprising further instructions for
identifying services available on the network but not contained in the service
database and updating the services database with the identified services.

16. The product of Claim 15, further comprising identifying services
not available on the network and not contained in the services database and
updating the services database with the identified services.

17. The product of Claim 9, further comprising instructions for
identifying document production devices capable of providing the selected
services and generating a user interface with user accessible controls for
selecting one or more, if any, of the identified document production devices.

18. The product of Claim 9, further comprising instructions for
monitoring the production status of delivered document production plans.

19. In a computer network, a system for managing document
production requests, comprising:
a production client operable to receive a document production request,
the client comprising a capture driver operable to capture the document
production request and an interface translator operable to display user accessible
controls for producing the document production request;
a production server in electronic communication with the client and
operable to direct one or more selected devices to produce the captured
document production request with selected services and options, the server
comprising a services engine operable to inform the client of potential services

11 and a production engine operable to deliver the captured document production
12 request to the selected device or devices.

1 20. The system of Claim 19, wherein the capture driver is further
2 operable to transform the document production request into a selected format
3 and to transfer the formatted document production request to the production
4 server.

1 21. The system of Claim 19, wherein the server further comprises a
2 web server for communicating with the client and the client interface translator
3 is a web browser.

1 22. The system of Claim 21, wherein the services engine includes a
2 services locator operable to identify services available on the network.

1 23. The system of Claim 21, wherein the production server further
2 comprises a database of known services available on the network.

1 24. The system of Claim 23, wherein the services locator is operable
2 to identify available services by querying the database and by querying the
3 document production devices present on the network.

1 25. The system of Claim 19, wherein the services engine further
2 includes a device identifier operable to identify one or more, if any, available
3 document production devices that are compatible with the selected services and
4 options and to provide the interface translator with information required to
5 display user accessible controls for selecting one or more, if any, of the
6 identified document production devices.

1 26. The system of Claim 19, wherein the production engine includes a
2 production queue.

1 27. The system of Claim 26, wherein the production engine further
2 includes a production manager in electronic communication with the production
3 queue.

1 28. The system of Claim 19, wherein the Client further comprises a
2 server locator.

1 29. A distributed document production system comprising:
2 one or more document production devices;
3 a production client operating on a first computing device;
4 a production server operating on a second computing device, the
5 production server in electronic communication with the production client and the
6 document production devices, the production server operable to receive a
7 production request from the production client and to deliver the request to one
8 or more selected production devices in a device specific format.

1 30. The document production system of Claim 29, wherein the
2 production client comprises a capture driver operable to electronically transfer a
3 document production request to the production server and an interface translator
4 operable to display user accessible controls for selecting services for producing
5 the document.

1 31. The document production system of Claim 30, wherein the capture
2 driver is further operable to transform the document production request into a
3 generic format and to transfer the formatted document production request to the
4 production server.

1 32. The document production system of Claim 29, wherein the
2 production server comprises a services engine operable to inform the production
3 client of potential services and a production engine operable to deliver the
4 document production request with selected services to one or more of the
5 document production devices.

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1 33. The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2 interface translator is a web browser and the production server further
3 comprises a web server for communicating with the interface translator.

1 34. The document production system of Claim 32, further comprising
2 a services database and wherein the services engine includes a services locator
3 operable to locate services by querying the services database.

1 35. The document production system of Claim 34, wherein the
2 production services locator is further operable to locate services by querying the
3 document production devices.

1 36. The document production system of Claim 34, wherein the
2 production server further includes an update service operable to update the
3 services database with services available on the document production devices
4 but not currently represented in the services database

1 37. The document production system of Claim 36, wherein the
2 production engine includes drivers for the production devices and wherein the
3 update service is further operable identify new devices and to update the device
4 drivers with drivers for newly identified devices.

1 38. The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2 services engine further includes a device identifier operable to identify one or
3 more, if any, of the document production devices that are compatible with the
4 selected services, and wherein the production engine is operable to supply the
5 interface generator with information to display user accessible controls for
6 selecting one or more, if any, of the identified document production devices.

1 39. The document production system of Claim 32, wherein the
2 production engine includes a production queue and a production manager in
3 electronic communication with the production queue.

1 40. The system of Claim 30, wherein the production client further
2 comprises a server locator.

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